

BEHIND LIBERTY'S STATUE.

A LONELY AND ALMOST FORGOTTEN SOLDIER'S GRAVEYARD.

Most of the Tombstones of Children—The History of the Dead Forgotten and Their Names Scarcely Decipherable—The Ghost of Hicks the Pirate Alleged to be Around Some Epitaphs on the Old Slabs.



BEHIND the stately figure of the Goddess of Liberty, out of the ken of her eyes, is a patch of earth which speaks of emancipation to many careworn hearts.

By the side of the path which winds around the base of the statue is a graveyard. Its modest dimensions hardly merit so large a name, for it is simply a lot, thirteen paces by eight, inclosed by a plain iron railing, painted a sombre black.

A huge willow, whose rugged trunk four men could not embrace, rises against the blue sky, and the masses of long, drooping branches screen with their shadow the slabs of the narrow resting-place of the dead from the sun. Several yards this side of the magnificent tree is another, its rival in superlative growth.

The iron railing is on a foundation wall of brick, whose western extremity, through the slope of the ground, is six or seven feet in height, though the opposite end is on a level with the path.

The tombstones are of various shapes and sizes, two or three slender weeds spring from its sides and sway lightly in the breeze, and the wash from the coping has discolored the walls with iron limbs over the railing and read the inscriptions on the graves.

If you are a man you can climb over the railing and read the inscriptions on the graves. If you are not, then no introduction to the humble dead is possible, as the gate is locked, the letters have been corroded by the breath of the sea to indistinguishable, and not even the tradition of the epitaphs lingers on Liberty Island.

The ghost of Hicks, the pirate, is said to haunt the barracks. But the spirits of these tenants of the grave came back only as tender memories to a soldier's heart and a soldier's household, and the soldier and his household have now become memories, too.

The long grasses, nourished by the bodies of the dead, wave with a pitying sigh in the strong, salty wind, and are yellowed by the alembic of autumn. There are a dozen graves in the inclosure. At their head drop wearily as many small American flags, with dimmed colors. Half a dozen pots of flowers complete the decoration. A scarlet geranium and purple stock supply the place of flowers of color in the withered vegetation. One pot lies upon its side, the flower crushed. The Grand Army of the Republic decorated the graves.

There is a touch of pathos in this lonely little graveyard keeping so modestly in the background of the scene dominated by the mighty goddess. One wonders who its dead were and how they came to be there. They were the children of Major David Wilcox, once stationed at Fort Wood on Liberty Island. Probably their deaths figured in the records of the military occupation of the island. For the statue were begun the military occupation of the place ceased and the records were sent to the archives of the War Department.

Col. A. G. Tassin, the present commander on the island, told the soldiers are again stationed there, knows nothing about the little cemetery patch.

Within the inclosure is another, with an iron railing of the same material. Two flag-tombstones are here, of white marble. One is sacred to the memory of Virginia Davis, stepdaughter of Major D. Wilcox, who died at the battle of Gettysburg. The other is to the memory of Mrs. Wilcox, who died in 1886, and of Maria Satterlee Stewart, her daughter, a baby of five months.

The next tombstone, which is outside the inclosure, is to the memory of another infant whose mortal life was three years, four months and eleven days. The daughter of Edward B. and Rosina Smith, and bore the large name of Elizabeth. Her companion is also an infant, "Joseph" (in very big letters), "son of Joseph and Mary Young, aged two years."

Among the tombstones is one of a dark-red stone, which has been badly chipped and is covered with green from moisture. This has some obituary poetry on it, the one instance in which the elegiac muse consoled the surviving friends of the deceased with the soothing balm of rhythm.

In memory of John Case, who died Sept 1 (the year is broken off), aged twenty-two years seven months.

Consigned by death to shade of night, He lies concealed from mortal sight, And from the tomb his spirit never rises, Shall bid his slumbering dust arise. Why should his many friends complain? His loss is his, and theirs is his pain. With life's temptations seas at rest, From life's unnumbered he is blest. Why should we mourn to lose him? To meet our God, and meet him there.

The rest of the epitaph, as if conscious that

DEJA.

BY LIND BOYD PORTER.

When I was a student at Cadix, I played on the Spanish guitar, (ching! ching!)

I also made love to the ladies,—

AROSE the sun-tint of my window. The hum of the light, boyish carol of that old college song were more than I could hear. Charlie Trenholm used to sing that song. How often he has dropped into my room on the Rue d'Alphonse.

Sorbonne, thrown himself into a chair and struck out that tune from his guitar words. He sang beautifully as a family never tried to hear him, but I don't like to hear any one else sing those words, and never will if I can help it.

We were students together at the University. He at l'Ecole de Droit and I at l'Ecole de Medecin.

He came from England and I from America. We met entirely by chance, but in a very few days after we found ourselves neighbors in the Hotel Lafayette were perfectly inseparable.

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